



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
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GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

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FOREWORD

Welcome to Stroud District Council's Gender Equality Scheme. It builds on the equalities work the Council has carried out to date to ensure that we meet the specific requirements of the Equality Act 2006.

We are committed to ensuring that through our role as policy maker, employer and service provider, everyone is treated fairly, irrespective of gender, disability, race, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief. This supports our overall vision of *'Leading a community that is making Stroud District a better place to live, work and visit for everyone.'*

The Council recognises that men and women may have different needs. Through implementing the requirements of the duty, we will try to have a better understanding of gender equality. In addition, the duty will help the Council take more positive action to provide a more user-friendly service, and to make better use of the talents of both men and women at work.

The Gender Equality Scheme has a 3-year action plan that highlights actions needed to promote equality of opportunity between men and women, to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.

We welcome your views about this Scheme as they will help us achieve our ambitions of ensuring equality and diversity is embodied in everything we do.

David Hagg
Chief Executive

Chas Fellows
Leader

INTRODUCTION

In 2003 Stroud District Council adopted a comprehensive Equality Scheme in line with the requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government. This widened the Council's statutory duty to produce a Race Equality Scheme to also encompass issues around disability and gender.

The Primary Objectives of the Equality Scheme are:

- ❑ to progress equalities in relation to improved access to services and facilities and in employment and career progression;
- ❑ to develop partnerships with other public bodies, local authorities and voluntary services to share and promote equality;
- ❑ to assist and advise services in putting together specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and time-bound Equality Action Plans;
- ❑ to communicate equalities issues and policies to all staff and Members.

This Gender Equality Scheme builds on the equalities work the Council has carried out to date to ensure that the specific requirements of the Equalities Act 2006 are met.

What do we mean by Gender?

Gender is often confused with sex. Sex generally refers to anatomy and biology whereas gender refers to qualities and behaviours society expects from a female or a male. These roles are learned, change over time and vary enormously across and within cultures. As well as needs, men and women often have different perceptions, aspirations and priorities. Gender equality ensures that these are valued equally.

Transgender: Non-identification with, or non-presentation as, the gender one was assigned at birth.

Transsexual: a person who has undergone a sex change operation or a person whose sexual identification is entirely with the opposite sex

GENDER EQUALITY DUTY

With effect from the 6 April 2007, the Equality Act 2006 amended the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) by introducing a statutory gender equality duty on public bodies. This means that when carrying out its functions Stroud District Council must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; and
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

“Unlawful discrimination” in relation to gender is defined as:

- Direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of sex
- Discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity leave
- Discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment
- Direct and indirect discrimination against married persons and civil partners
- Victimisation
- Harassment and sexual harassment.

The general duty applies to the Council’s policy-making function, its role as an employer and provider of local services and also its responsibility to enforce or make any statutory discretion and decision-making. Furthermore, the duty extends to public services and functions that are undertaken by contractors.

Whilst there is a tendency to focus on equality for women when looking at gender issues, this Scheme equally applies to men, as well as the particular needs of transsexual and transgender people. In 1999 the SDA was amended by the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 2003 to make it clear that transsexual men and women are expressly included in the SDA where they suffer discrimination because they have undergone, or are about to undergo gender reassignment.

The duty will be enforced by judicial review and the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) will have the power to issue compliance notices if there is a breach of the duty. As well as considering issues of gender equality when making decisions about the future, the Council must also take action to tackle the consequences of decisions in the past which failed to give due regard to gender equality. This will entail identifying and addressing any significant inequalities resulting from policies currently in place.

Specific Duties

The general duty is the first positive step towards ensuring that men and women (boys and girls) receive services and are offered employment and development opportunities that meet their needs, abilities and aspirations more closely. To support progress in delivering the general duty, there are also a number of specific duties that the Council must comply with and these are to:

- Prepare and publish a gender equality scheme to show how the Council intends to meet its general and specific duties as well as set out its gender equality objectives
- Gather and use information on how the Council’s policies and practices affect gender equality in the workplace and in the delivery of services
Consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap

- Consult appropriate stakeholders such as employees, trade unions, service users and other community organisations and take account of relevant information when determining the Council's gender equality objectives
- Assess the impact of our current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality
- Implement the actions set out in this Scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so
- Produce a report on the progress of the Scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years.

Benefits of the Scheme

The new duty aims to make gender equality central to the way that the Council works in order to create:

- Better-informed decision making and policy development
- A clearer understanding of the needs of service users
- Better quality services which meet varied needs
- More effective targeting of policy and resources
- Better results and greater confidence in public services
- A more effective use of talent in the workforce.

Women are frequently disadvantaged by policies and practices that do not recognise their greater caring responsibilities, the different pattern of their working lives, their more limited access to resources and their greater vulnerability to domestic violence and sexual assault.

Men are also disadvantaged by workplace cultures that do not support their family or child care responsibilities, by family services that assume they have little or no role in parenting, or by health services which do not recognise their different needs.

Both sexes suffer from stereotyping of their roles and needs. The duty should help the public sector and those working with it, to identify and respond to stereotyping, sex discrimination and sexism, resulting in improvements for all.

STROUD DISTRICT GENDER PROFILE

Population

The Stroud District is a rural shire district with a population of 109,951, comprising 55,997 (51%) female and 53,954 (49%) male.

There are no official figures for transgender people in the UK, but on its website the Gender Trust states that 'some estimates now put the figure at greater than 1 in 10,000 people'.

The population is relatively affluent with low unemployment, above average educational attainment, relatively good health and low crime levels. Key local issues include the high levels of out-commuting and car use by residents, affordable housing, and an ageing population.

Employment

In the Stroud District approximately 65,300 residents are of working age. Of these people 31,200 (48%) are female and 34,100 (52%) are male.

Approximately 80% (57,200) of Stroud district's working age residents are economically active. Of these people 25,000 (44%) are female and 30,200 (56%) are male.

Almost 95% of the 25,000 economically active women in Stroud are in employment, compared with 90% (27,300) of the 30,200 economically active men.

In Stroud 18% (12,100) of the population are economically inactive. Over two thirds of these people are female (7,600 or 69.5%), with 4,400 (30.5%) being male.

However, of the 7,600 economically inactive females in the district, 2,800 want a job against 4,800 who do not. Of the 4,500 economically inactive males, the sample size is too small to determine how many want or do not want a job.

Full time workers in Stroud enjoy an average gross weekly earning of £455.20 a week. The average figure for full time female workers is £ 347.90 and for male workers this figure is 28% higher at £444.60 per week.

Summary

Females		Profile	Males	
Number	Percentage		Number	Percentage
		Population		
55,997	51%	All residents	53,954	49%
11,246	56%	Over age of 65	8,625	44%
82.0		Life expectancy	78.3	
		Employment		
31,200	48%	Working age	34,100	52%
25,000	44%	Economically active	30,200	56%
23,700	95%	In employment	27,300	90%
7,600	63%	Economically inactive	4,500	37%
£366.10		Average gross weekly earnings	£492.90	
219	28.6%	Residents of working age receiving JSA	547	71.40%

PROFILE OF STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Elected Member profile

Stroud District Council has 51 elected Members, 34 of whom are men and 17 (33%) are women. A review of the gender split of committees will be carried out following the May 2007 elections.

Employee Profile

Stroud District Council employs 494 staff with roughly equal numbers of male and female full-time employees. However, nearly three times as many women work part-time compared to men.

The proportion of women working full-time (53%) is nearly the same as part-time (47%); whereas 75% of men work full-time compared with 25% part-time.

Summary

Females		Profile	Males	
Number	Percentage		Number	Percentage
299	60.5%	All employees	195	39.5%
157	52.7%	Full time employees	141	47.3%
140	74.1%	Part time employees	49	25.9%
2	28.6%	Strategic Management Team	5	71.4%

Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap refers to the difference in average hourly earnings of men and women. One requirement of the gender equality duty is that the Council must “*consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap*” and such objectives must focus on the three main causes of this gap, which are **pay discrimination, caring responsibilities** and **occupational segregation**. The last category means that, if necessary, the Council must avoid the concentration of men and women into particular occupations, which can promote traditional gender stereotypes such as women doing administration work and men undertaking more manual roles.

Job Evaluation

With effect from 1st July 2005, the Council adopted the Greater London Job Evaluation Scheme.

The pay range for each post is set using an analytical job evaluation process. A points-based scheme assesses each job against a number of factors. The process involves:

- *The employee and manager agreeing a job description*
- *Evaluation of the job data by officers trained to use the scheme*

- *The evaluation score determining the salary range for the job.*

Since all of the Council's posts below Strategic Director level were evaluated in accordance with the Greater London Scheme in July 2005, no further grading reviews will be undertaken until July 2007.

Grading structure

The Council's new grading structure consists of 12 grades. Each grade is a single spot grade, based on the NJC pay spine for Local Government Staff.

Progression through the grades will be via promotion and all staff will be encouraged to develop the skills and competences required to advance their careers with the Council.

The Council has adopted a senior management structure with a Strategic Team comprising a Chief Executive, two multi-functional Strategic Directors and four Strategic Heads of Service.

Summary of gender split by pay grade

FEMALE		GRADE	MALE	
Percentage	Number		Percentage	Number
47.5	19	1	52.5	21
75	55	2	25	18
81	92	3	19	21
66	67	4	34	34
45.5	32	5	54.5	38
39	18	6	61	28
32	8	7	68	17
33	3	8	67	6
30	3	9	70	7
50	2	10	50	2
0	0	11	100	2
0	0	12	100	1

CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT

The importance of the consultation and involvement of those who are potentially affected by services is essential in drawing up a scheme, which will be effective in addressing inequalities between different communities and individuals.

In gathering information to shape this Scheme, all Council staff and Members were invited to offer suggestions on how Council policies may unjustifiably have an adverse impact with respect to gender. This could be from the perspective of being an employee, service user, trade union representative or member of a voluntary group.

To engage the community in giving feedback, the local authorities, County Council, Healthcare Trust, and Police authority in Gloucestershire worked on a combined approach to consultation. Community groups were invited to give feedback on the following questions:

- Have you or your organisation, experience of unfair or biased gender treatment in connection with any Council policy?
- If so, what could the Council put in place to prevent such an instance recurring?
- Are you aware of any gender issues in the way that the carries out its business (policies, practices and procedures) that create disadvantage to women, men, or transgender people? Please outline these issues.
- Can you suggest any ways in which the Council might further promote equality between men, women and transgender people?

In addition to this concerted approach, Stroud District Council invited users of the Customer Services centre to give their views in respect of gender.

General Satisfaction Survey

Every three years all English councils conduct a best value satisfaction survey. This is the single largest research exercise that Stroud District Council undertakes, with questionnaires being sent out to a total of 7,155 people. The results of these surveys – as well as other surveys such as a recent budget consultation exercise – will be analysed by gender to highlight areas where satisfactions differs between men and women.

This approach does exclude the experiences of transgender people, but the Council supports and works closely with a local community group, GayGlos, which also advocates on behalf of transgender people.

OUR COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY

Flexible Working and Family Friendly Policies

The Council has developed a range of policies to reflect current legislation, changing business needs and in recognition of employee's commitments outside of the workplace.

- Working Hours Scheme
- Flexible Working Policy
- Maternity Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Parental Leave
- Adoption Leave
- Time off for Dependents

Promoting Acceptable Behaviour

The Council expects all its employees to treat each other with dignity, trust and respect and this is certainly behaviour that is promoted. Employees are encouraged to have an awareness of the effect of their behaviour on others and to communicate honestly and openly.

The aim of the **Bullying and Harassment policy** is to ensure that all employees are protected from unacceptable behaviour in the workplace and know what to do if they experience it.

The emphasis in any claim of unacceptable behaviour is on the recipient's experience rather than the perpetrator's motivation. Categories of unacceptable behaviour include:

- *Discrimination which is a failure to afford equal opportunities in the work place on the grounds of sex, marital status, age, race, nationality, disability, sexuality, religious belief, ethnicity or other grounds covered by statute.*
- *Harassment, which is, unwanted conduct that has the effect of violating the dignity of individuals or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This includes, but is not limited to, unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.*

Community Safety

One of the Council's key priorities is to create safer and stronger communities. We are working in partnership with other public and voluntary organisations to address specific issues around domestic violence and hate crime in the District.

Domestic Violence

The Council works closely with a number of local organisations who assist the victims of domestic violence and their families and a range of useful contact information can be found on our website at

http://www.stroud.gov.uk/docs/life_events/trouble.asp?did=trouble

Domestic violence is essentially a pattern of behaviour characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person over another within the context of an intimate relationship. It is manifested in various ways, which include but are not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and the imposition of social isolation, and is most commonly a combination of them all.

Research shows that a majority of the victims of domestic violence are women and the perpetrators predominantly men. The British Crime Survey (2001) suggests that one in four women and one in six men will be a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime. Such acts of violence can also take place in lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transsexual relationships.

Domestic Violence accounts for approximately 25% of all Violence Against the Person offences in the district. The victims of Domestic Violence are predominantly female, aged between 35-39 years.

Stroud District Council is a signatory to the Gloucestershire wide Domestic Violence Strategy <http://www.dvintervention.co.uk/assets/media/dvstrategy05-08-V2.pdf> and launched a Stroud sub action group in January 2007 to support the implementation of the Strategy locally.

Hate Crime and Incident Action Group

The Cotswolds and Stroud Hate Crime and Incident Action Group was formed with local partners to provide an operational response to Hate Crime incidents within the Stroud and Cotswolds areas. The group is chaired by the Council's Head of Community Safety and is supported by a number of district council officers.

A Hate Incident is defined as;

'Any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate'.

To provide consistency in the recording of hate incidents, the Gloucestershire Constabulary and Gloucestershire Hate Crime & Incident Strategic Group have adopted the following categories by which to group and record incidents;

- Age;
- Disability (including mental health);
- **Gender (including transphobia);**
- Race (ethnicity);
- Religion (including faith & belief);
- Sexual Orientation (including lesbian, gay and bi-sexual);
- Any other group identity.

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

The council recognises that monitoring is essential in order to build an accurate picture of our actions with respect to employment and service delivery and to evaluate how successful this Scheme is in achieving its aims and objectives.

Monitoring by gender is carried out; for both existing employees and job applicants; for the take up of training opportunities; and for the number and nature of reported grievances and disciplinaries.

A longer-term aim of the Council will be to keep records covering the users of council services. Records will be kept for monitoring purposes only and will be analysed and reported to elected members as and when necessary. The council will adhere to the Data Protection Act.

All services produce annual Service Plans which are at the heart of the Council's resource planning and performance monitoring / reporting processes. The Action Plan produced will be integrated into these helping to ensure that mainstreaming takes place.

The **Performance and Audit Overview and Scrutiny Committee** is responsible for ensuring that the actions and targets are met, and receive a quarterly report on progress, along with appropriate performance indicators. The committee is also responsible for monitoring the Executive's performance in implementing the Scheme and associated improvement plans.

One of the Council's mechanisms to deliver and promote our Scheme internally is our Equality Steering Group, which is made up of officers from a range of services across the Council, as well as the portfolio holder for Community Cohesion. The Equality Steering Group will keep this policy under review.

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)

The Council currently monitors a number of BVPIs relating to gender:

Ref	Indicator	Service Area	Actual 2006/07	Target 2007/08
BV2a	The level (if any) of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms.	Policy and Review	2	3
BV 11a	% of top 5% earners that are women	Human Resources	32.32%	32.5%
BV225	% Actions against Domestic Violence (Total of 11 Action points to be achieved)	Community Safety	72% (8)	81% (9)
BV183a	The average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation of households, which include dependent children or a pregnant woman and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need.	Rehousing	2	2
BV183b	The average length of stay in hostel accommodation of households, which include dependent children or a pregnant woman and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need.	Rehousing	0	0

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF OUR ACTIVITIES

Stroud District Council has in place a standard Equality Impact Assessment template for ensuring that we do not disadvantage any groups or persons. The intention is to have a process that is systematic, proactive, and explicit and ensures the equality issues of all our communities are addressed in our day-to-day activity.

The assessment tool tests the impact of new and existing policies and services on people to find out if there is any adverse impact or unlawful discrimination or any unmet need or requirements. “Adverse impact” means that the service or policy is disadvantageous to one or more groups of people. The key purpose is to help us identify direct and indirect discrimination, institutional discrimination and any gaps in service provision.

We have established an **Equalities Advisory Panel** to assist us in carrying out our equality impact assessments. This panel provides external scrutiny of our compliance on equalities and diversity. The panel meet quarterly with individual Heads of Service to discuss equality issues within service provision and to advise where improvements can be made. The group comprises representatives from the community and voluntary sector covering the six diversity strands. It includes a representative from the local women’s refuge and GayGlos, an organisation advocating on behalf of transgender people, as well as lesbians and gay men.

Developing And Sharing Best Practice

Stroud District Council is part of the County and South West regional equality networks. Working closely with our colleagues ensures that we make best use of our resources and enables us to develop and share good practice to the benefit of all our communities.

ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	DELIVERY/ LEAD	TARGET DATE
1. Conduct Equal Pay Audit	Identify and develop an equal pay process and action plan	Head of Human Resources	2007
2. Encourage more women to apply for management and other senior positions within the Council	Continuing to increase our annual best value target BVPI 11a.	Head of Human Resources	2007/08
3. Promote awareness of flexible working and family friendly policies	Use variety of communication methods to ensure knowledge and understanding of family friendly support schemes.	Head of Human Resources	2007
4. Identify if services are being received differently or are being under-used by a specific gender.	Monitor the satisfaction rates and usage of services by gender and take appropriate action to address any inequality, disadvantage or discrimination.	Heads of Service	2007/08
5. Ensure equal access to services	Analyse Best Value survey to identify any gender imbalance in service delivery.	Senior Policy officer Heads of Services	2007
	Monitor gender equality objectives and targets set in Service Action plans	Senior Policy officer / Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	Quarterly
6. Ensure that external providers of Council Services meet their statutory gender equality requirements and the Council's equality policies and	Review pre-contract questionnaire to ensure gender equality criteria is covered in the Council's procurement process.	Business Support officer / Heads of Service	2007

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	DELIVERY/ LEAD	TARGET DATE
practices.			
7. Consider gender equality issues in all council functions, policies and strategy development.	Continue to carry out equality impact assessment process across all council services	Heads of Service	2007/08
8. Promote awareness of gender health related issues to staff (eg. Breast and prostate cancer)	Invite speakers on a range of gender specific issues to address staff at Proud of Stroud sessions.	Proud of Stroud working group	2008
9. Gain better understanding of gender issues within Stroud District	Compile comprehensive gender profile of the District	Senior Policy Officer/Maiden	2008
10. Require funding applicants to include gender analysis and targets in grant applications	Include gender specific questions and monitoring in grant application process.	Strategic Head of Regeneration and Culture	2008
11. Ensure that decision making within the council actively considers the promotion of gender equality	Develop programme of briefings for elected members on equalities in decision making and responsibilities of regulatory committees.	Principal Democratic Services Officer	2008
12. Meetings are appropriately scheduled to enable staff / members with care responsibilities to attend	Review civic timetable (eg. avoid scheduling meetings during school holidays)	Principal Democratic Services Officer	2008/09